

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL191
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Name of Service:	Little Sparrows Early Years Preschool Service
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Address of Service:	Hartstown Community Centre (behind), Hartstown Road, Clonsilla, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Edain Johnson
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
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Inspection undertaken by:	T. Nelson
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable.
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Description of service

Little Sparrows Early Years Preschool Service is a sessional service located in Dublin 15 and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 33 children aged 2 to 6 years Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates two Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme sessional services; 9.00am to 12.00pm, and 12.30pm to 3.30pm, and they also provide afterschool care in the afternoons.

Little Sparrows Early Years Preschool Service operates from a Community Centre with two care rooms; Bubble 1 is located in a separate cabin to the rear of the premises and Bubble 2 is located in the main building. There are sanitary facilities located in Bubble 1; and Bubble 2 has the exclusive use of the centre sanitary facilities during the operational hours of the service. A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to rear of the premises

Staffing

There are currently six staff employed by the service including the registered provider and five childcare staff who work directly with the children. All of the staff were present on the day of the inspection.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(3) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 16(1) Records in relation to Children
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid
- Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16(1)(h)(j)(k) Records in relation to Children.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

The files of the six staff were reviewed and the registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (2)
- (a)(b) There was three validated written references from recent past employers and one validated reference from a reputable source available for two staff members.
- (c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the six staff members.
- (d) One adult who had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection. There was documentary evidence available for five staff members that this was not required.

(4) The six staff who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) There was no documentary evidence available that the eight references available for four staff members had been validated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective action: The registered provider has followed up and received 2 references for each staff member. Each reference has also been validated. Record taken and kept on staff file.

Preventive action: Going forward, prior to commencement of employment at Little Sparrows EYS, each staff members file will contain all documents required, including validated references.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been addressed.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs.
- (3) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Six staff were allocated to work directly with the 19 children who were present on the day of the inspection with a breakdown as follows:
- Bubble 1 room - 2 adults to 7 children aged between 2 years 8 months – 3 years 6 months old.
 - Bubble 2 room - 4 adults to 12 children aged between 3 - 4 years old.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*
- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
 - (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
 - (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
 - (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
 - (e) the facilities available;*
 - (f) the opening hours and fees;*

- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) Details of the name, position, qualifications, and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee were maintained within the staff files.
- (b) The service Tusla certificate was displayed within the service and showed detailed the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services.
- (c) (d) (e) The statement of purpose and function outlined the adult: child ratios, the type of care or programme provided and the facilities available within the service.
- (f) The opening hours and fees of the service were displayed on the noticeboard in the Bubble Room 2.
- (g) The registered provider maintained all of the policies required in accordance with Regulation 10.
- (h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of the children on a daily basis were maintained.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) The registered provider did not keep a written record of the staff roster. Rosters must be maintained in order to accurately record staff attendance within the service.
 - (j) The registered provider did not ensure a full record in writing for the administration of medication was maintained. For Example:
 - From the two records reviewed, neither had details of the child, and one did not have a parent's signature acknowledging the child had received the medication.

Fully completed records of the administration of medication along with consent must be maintained in order to safely document and track the administration of any medication in the service.

(k) The registered provider did not ensure a full record in writing for accidents and incidents was maintained.

Of the six records reviewed the following was observed:

- Two records did not include the child's surname, and five did not include the child's date of birth.
- Five did not include a staff signature and three did not include the parents' signature.

Fully completed records of any accident or incident must be maintained in order to track and review incidents or accidents.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (i) Corrective action: A new staff roster has been developed and is displayed in the classroom.
Preventive action: Ensure that roster is completed at the beginning of each week, taking into account any changes that may need to be added/amended.
- (j) Corrective action: The registered provider will ensure all medical administration records are maintained. To include full names and dates of births of children involved. Ensure signatures of manager and parents alike are filled in.
Preventive action: the registered provider reported a meeting was held which outlined the importance of records, and how imperative it is to ensure that the correct and relevant information is included in said records/reports. Manager will check record books weekly.
- (k) The registered provider will ensure all incident/accident reports are maintained. To include full names and dates of births of children involved. Ensure signature of manager and parents are filled in.
Preventive action: The registered provider reported that during a staff meeting, staff were advised and instructed to fill out accident/incidents reports correctly and appropriately. Manager will check report books weekly.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (i) Copy of staff roster.
- (j) Copy of minutes of staff meeting.
- (k) Copy of minutes of staff meeting.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 16 have been addressed

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Entry to the service was managed and monitored by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- The outdoor play area to the rear of the premises was fully enclosed, with the lock inaccessible to the children.
- Toys and equipment in the indoor and outdoor environments were in a good state of repair.
- Cleaning agents were observed to be inaccessible.

Infection Control:

- The premises appeared to be in a clean and hygienic condition and documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the premises.
- Liquid soap and single use hand towels were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.
- Staff were observed supporting children to hand wash before lunch.
- There was a drinks station with individual cups available for the children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clearly identified and were unobstructed.
- Evacuation procedures using text and imagery were clearly displayed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) The service provided evidence that a person trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1) The following was available for review:
- (a) A record of fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on the 15 September 2023.
 - (b) An up-to-date maintenance record was available for the Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were serviced in November 2022 and the smoke alarms were maintained on the 20 July 2023.
 - (4) A procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in each of the care rooms

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and
 - (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

- (d) The premises appeared to be cleaned and maintained.
- (e) There was adequate and suitable sanitary accommodation available to the staff and children. There were two toilets available to the children in Bubble 1 and Bubble 2 had the exclusive use of the community centre sanitary accommodation, with one toilet available for staff and two toilets available for children.